

HONORING LINDA DARNELL
THORPE ON THE OCCASION OF
HER RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the many family, friends, and colleagues in paying tribute to my dear friend, Linda Darnell Thorpe, as she celebrates her retirement after 36 years of dedicated service as an educator with the New Haven Public School System. She has been a teacher that is not only loved by her students, but respected by her colleagues—a reflection of all that we hope and expect our educators to be.

A native of New Haven, Linda was educated locally earning a B.S. in education from Southern Connecticut State University as well as an M.S. from the University of Connecticut. She began her career at the Martin Luther King, Jr. School where she taught second grade. She spent 24 years at MLK, teaching two generations of students—literally having the opportunity to teach some of the children of the young people she first taught at the beginning of her career. She has spent the last 12 years at the Edgewood Magnet School where she has taken on the challenge of educating a more diverse group of fifth and sixth grade students.

I have often spoke of our nation's need for talented, creative educators ready to help our children learn and grow. Throughout her career, Linda has been just that kind of teacher. She is well-known among her colleagues as always being the first to arrive in the morning and one of the last to leave in the evening. Linda would arrive 6 o'clock in the morning and, on more than one occasion, would have to return home when it was announced that school would be closed on a snow day.

Linda's deep commitment to education is best reflected in the success of her students. Her enthusiasm and energy combined with her belief that children learn best when they are active in the learning process created an environment where children not only wanted to learn, they had fun doing so. The myriad of accolades, awards, and commendations that she has received throughout the years are testimony to the positive impact she has had on her students. Her students were excited to be in her classroom and inspired to succeed. That was her gift to them. For an educator, there is no greater legacy one could leave.

In a career that has spanned four decades, Linda has touched the lives of thousands of young people. She has helped to shape their education and their character—preparing them with the tools and skills they need and building a foundation on which they will enjoy future success. She has also served as an inspiration to her colleagues. Today, as she celebrates her retirement and reflects on her career, I am proud to join her longtime companion, Stanley Welch, her grandson Winston, and all of those gathered today in extending my sincere thanks and appreciation for her outstanding and invaluable contributions. Linda Darnell Thorpe is an extraordinary woman, teacher, and friend and we are all better for having the opportunity to know her.

IN HONOR OF THE MOST
VENERABLE THICH HO GIAC

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I wish to celebrate the life and ministry of the Most Venerable Thich Ho Giac, who currently serves at the Phap Luan Buddhist Culture Center in Houston, Texas. He was born on January 14, 1928 and is now 80 years old. He does not have any biological children of his own, but he is still a father figure and mentor to many in the Buddhist faith.

The Most Venerable Thich Ho Giac has committed his life to religion and service. He was admitted to monastery life when he was five years old. He was ordained as a bhikkhu in 1948. He came to the United States in 1982 and became a United States citizen in 1988. He has two leadership titles: Supreme patriarch of Buddhist Sangha and President of the Overseas Office of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam.

Madam Speaker, on this Father's Day, I ask my colleagues and the people of Houston to honor the Most Venerable Thich Ho Giac for his seventy-five years of service and leadership in the Buddhist faith.

**PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT
AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008**

SPEECH OF

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6003) to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes:

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. As this country's sole provider of regularly scheduled intercity passenger rail service, Amtrak's importance and necessity to all Americans is clear. In the face of continually rising gas prices, overloaded highways and congested airports, many Americans are being forced to make difficult financial decisions regarding their modes of travel. Amtrak has become an ever more viable transportation option at such a time, and continues to be a practical option for many of those people searching for an efficient and economical travel alternative.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, Amtrak carried almost 25.8 million passengers and posted approximately \$1.5 billion in ticket revenue in 2007. This is a gain of 10 percent over FY06 ticket revenues, and is the third consecutive year that ticket revenues have increased. It is through a combination of increased profits and a reauthorization bill that proposes \$14.4 billion dollars over the next five years that Amtrak will have an incredible opportunity to thrive and flourish.

H.R. 6003 does much to aid in the continued growth and vitality of Amtrak. The bill authorizes \$4.2 billion to Amtrak for capital grants and \$3 billion for operating grants. It is

no secret that inconsistent Federal support has hampered Amtrak's ability to replace equipment necessary for it to provide service. These capital grants will help Amtrak make additional capital improvements and maintenance over its entire network. In addition, the operating grants authorized under the bill will help Amtrak pay salaries, health costs, overtime pay, fuel costs, facilities, and train maintenance and operations. These operating grants will also ensure that Amtrak can meet its obligations under its recently negotiated labor contract.

The Amtrak reauthorization bill also does much for intercity and high speed passenger rail in this country. The bill creates a new State Capital Grant program for intercity passenger rail and capital projects. It also recommends that the United States establish a high-speed rail network for the entire country. The bill authorizes \$1.75 billion for grants to States and Amtrak to finance the construction and equipment for 11 authorized high-speed rail corridors.

However, Amtrak still has many hurdles to overcome, the biggest of which is its \$3.17 billion worth of debt. Although Amtrak has taken great steps in reducing its debt by almost \$600 million since 2002, it still has a long way to go. As a result, this bill explicitly helps Amtrak manage its debt by authorizing \$345 million each year for debt service through FY2013.

Mr. Chairman, I am particularly pleased and grateful to the committee, under the leadership of Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman BROWN, for including a provision that calls for a report on Amtrak's utilization of the Beech Grove repair facility in my congressional district. The report will also include an examination to determine the extent that Amtrak is maximizing the opportunities for each facility, including any attempts to provide maintenance and repair to other rail carriers. As the largest Amtrak maintenance facility in the country, it is my belief that the Beech Grove facility is underutilized and that Amtrak can bring more maintenance work to this facility.

Mr. Chairman, this piece of legislation is long overdue and much needed. It is time for us to give Amtrak all the funding and opportunities it needs to become a more efficient and effective travel alternative for Americans. I am pleased that we are bringing this bill to the floor and I urge all my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

**COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND
LEGACY OF DARRENT
DEMARCUS WILLIAMS OF FORT
WORTH, TEXAS**

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Darrent "Dee" Williams and his legacy, the Darrent Williams Foundation.

Darrent Williams, a constituent of TX-D26, was a Fort Worth native and O.D. Wyatt graduate who died tragically January 1, 2007. Though his most important roles were as son, father and role model to many, he was also a star NFL player for the Denver Broncos. With

a magnanimous heart, a desire to excel and the fight in him to say to naysayers, "just watch me," Darrent took on the world.

As a senior high school player, he was named 7-4A Defensive Most Valuable Player. During his career at Oklahoma State University, where he received full scholarship, he tied for first place all-time Division I-A in career interception returns for touchdowns. In 2005 he was selected by the Denver Broncos as 2nd Round pick for starting Cornerback and Punt Returner.

At the age of 24, Darrent Williams' life was cut short. But through tragedy, a life-fulfilling purpose emerged. The Darrent Williams Foundation, which carries his namesake, will partner with a host of organizations to provide mentorship, counseling, tutoring, guidance, and athletic training and conditioning to youth ages 6 to 13. These services will be rendered with the overall goal to help ease life challenges and concerns regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic background. As partners with Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), L. Clifford Davis and Morningside Elementary Schools have been chosen as inaugural recipients.

Today, I join with the entire city of Fort Worth community in recognizing Darrent Williams' life and legacy.

IN HONOR OF FATHER'S DAY

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I wish to honor our Nation's fathers this Father's Day because they are the foundation of the family and heroes in the eyes of our Nation's children. Fathers are a vital part of the strength of the American family and I ask that my colleagues honor the fathers of our Nation on Sunday, June 15, 2008.

Father's Day is celebrated worldwide at different times of the year, but in America, we celebrate it on the third Sunday of June. Father's Day has a long history in the United States, although it was not officially recognized until the presidency of Richard Nixon. After the Civil War, the casualties were immeasurable and many women lost their fathers, husbands and family members. Two notable women, Sonora Smart Dodd of West Virginia and Grace Golden Clayton of Washington, acted upon their loss by encouraging their communities and states to commemorate the lives of their fathers. Sonora Smart Dodd, whose single-parent father raised 6 children before his death, was the first to propose such a celebration of fatherhood in 1909.

Father's Day is a time for Americans nationwide to show reverence and love for the father figures in their lives. It is also a time to pay tribute to those men who are single parents or guardians and still seem to be legends in their children's eyes. On June 15, I urge my colleagues and fellow citizens to celebrate Father's Day.

MERIDA INITIATIVE TO COMBAT ILLICIT NARCOTICS AND REDUCE ORGANIZED CRIME AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss HR 6028, "The Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008." This bill would fund, train and equip Mexican security forces that would help prevent the trafficking of guns and drugs over the U.S.-Mexico border. I will vote for this bill, but I have some concerns about the Merida Initiative.

By supporting the Merida Initiative, the United States demonstrates its commitment to prevent the illegal importation of guns and drugs by partnering with Mexican and Central American governments. This initiative benefits the larger battle against organized crime, prevents drugs from hitting American cities and counties, and stymies gang violence from spilling over the border.

I believe that Congress must ensure our money is being used to prevent illegal materials from coming over the border. We have a responsibility to protect American citizens from drugs and violence. However, we also have a responsibility to make sure the money we appropriate for foreign governments is not directly or indirectly leading to human rights violations. Human rights abuses cannot and should not be perpetrated by personnel trained using American dollars. I applaud Chairman BERMAN and the Foreign Affairs Committee for placing restrictions on the uses of this money and firmly support investigations into reports of human right abuses in countries receiving Merida Initiative funding.

Human rights violations have been reported in Mexico but are insufficiently investigated. A constituent of mine, Brad Will, a journalist for the Downtown Express, was murdered while on assignment in Mexico. The suspected gunmen were local officials. Tragically, his family is still waiting for justice. While we must protect our own citizens from guns and drugs, we must exercise the necessary oversight to ensure that this funding is used appropriately.

COMMEMORATING THE OPENING OF ELLA MAE GRATTS SHAMBLEE LIBRARY IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the grand opening of the Mrs. Ella Mae Gratts Shamblee Library in the city of Fort Worth, Texas. On Friday, June 13, 2008, elected officials, clergy, historians, stakeholders, residents and visitors will gather to celebrate this opening and the library named in her honor.

At a time when African-Americans were not allowed to sit in libraries or drink from "public"

water fountains, Mrs. Shamblee, the city's first African-American librarian, interceded and acted as an agent of change by providing books to those who otherwise may not have been able to visit the city's library. Mrs. Shamblee repeatedly carried boxes of books and rode on streetcars and buses to deliver them to the African-American community of South Fort Worth.

Through continued public service, Mrs. Shamblee became a pillar of the community and provided library services at establishments such as Stevens Grocery Store, a nursery school and the Federations Women's Club. Her enthusiasm in creating an atmosphere of education and knowledge resulted in her pioneering the library's bookmobile which was the forerunner of the city's branch libraries.

The Shamblee Library will serve as an epitome of advancements made in providing access to information to all residents in the city of Fort Worth, and particularly the Evans/Rosedale and Terrell Heights neighborhoods. Incorporated into the design of the historic Tommy Tucker building, the Shamblee Library is the cornerstone of the Eva & Rosedale Business and Cultural District and an edifice to the long-anticipated Southeast Fort Worth renaissance.

Today, I join with the entire city of Fort Worth community in recognizing the significance of this occasion and to pay tribute to the grand opening of the Ella Mae Gratts Shamblee Library.

IN HONOR OF REVEREND DR. JOE E. DANCY, SR.

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I wish to honor and recognize the life, legacy and ministry of the Reverend Dr. Joe E. Dancy, Sr., who currently serves as the pastor of St. James Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. Dr. Dancy was born on October 3, 1926 and is now 80 years old. Dr. Dancy has ten children, 56 grandchildren and over 100 great grandchildren and has been married for 63 years to Mrs. Vernia L. Dancy. On this Father's Day, I would like to salute him as the patriarch of the Dancy family, public servant to the people of Houston, and the presiding pastor at St. James Missionary Baptist Church.

Dr. Dancy has been preaching for 45 years and he has served the people of St. James for 41 years. In 1945, he began working for the City of Houston as a truck driver and he did not retire until 1978. During his 33 years with the City of Houston, he worked through the Civil Rights Movement, the Jim Crow era and the desegregation period. In addition, he worked as a community leader in Houston's Sunnyside community for over 60 years. Continuing his commitment to service, Dr. Dancy worked on community projects such as the Shutdown of the Sunnyside Incinerator, the community resistance movements against the expansions of numerous landfills that existed in Sunnyside, and most recently the fight against Southern Crushed Concrete. In a leadership capacity, he serves as a Chaplain for